

child must have the opportunity to pursue the American dream, and I firmly believe parents are in the best position to determine which schools their children should attend. As a parent myself, I am proud to celebrate National School Choice Week, and I look forward to continuing to advocate for local control of education and for further opportunities to provide parents with the ability to give their children the best education possible.

EXAMINING ONGOING HUMAN RIGHTS ABUSES IN VIETNAM

HON. CHRISTOPHER H. SMITH

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, January 25, 2012

Mr. SMITH of New Jersey. Mr. Speaker, yesterday I chaired a hearing to examine the ongoing human rights situation in Vietnam.

The Vietnamese Government continues to be an egregious violator of a broad array of human rights. Our distinguished witnesses who testified before me yesterday provided detailed accounts; I would like to highlight just a few areas of grave concern.

Despite the State Department's decision in 2006 to remove Vietnam from the list of Countries of Particular Concern as designated pursuant to the International Religious Freedom Act, Vietnam, in fact, continues to be among the worst violators of religious freedom in the world. According to the United States Commission for International Religious Freedom's 2011 Annual Report, "[t]he government of Vietnam continues to control religious communities, severely restrict and penalize independent religious practice, and brutally repress individuals and groups viewed as challenging its authority." I agree with USCIRF's conclusion that Vietnam should be designated a CPC country.

The State Department's designation of Vietnam as a Tier 2 Watch List country with respect to the minimum standards for the elimination of human trafficking also needs to be critically examined. The Department's 2011 Trafficking in Persons Report states not only that Vietnamese women and children are being sexually exploited, but that there are severe labor abuses occurring as well—with the government's complicity. The Report acknowledges that state-affiliated and state-licensed labor export companies engage in numerous trafficking-related violations, including fraud and the charging of illegal commissions for overseas employment. There also are documented cases of recruitment companies ignoring pleas for help from workers in exploitative situations.

As the sponsor of the Trafficking Victims Protection Act, I am deeply disturbed that the Tier Rankings are not being better utilized by our State Department to pressure Vietnam to correct the trafficking abuses occurring within its government, not to mention those in the private sector.

We were particularly privileged to have Ms. Phong-Anh Vũ with us to testify about the horrific suffering she endured when she was trafficked from Vietnam to Jordan. It is also troubling to hear about the abuse that she and others have continued to endure at the hands of the Vietnamese Government even after their escape from their traffickers. I greatly ad-

mire her courage and the Subcommittee is most appreciative the testimony she presented yesterday.

I met other courageous individuals during my last trip to Vietnam who were struggling for fundamental human rights in their country. Unfortunately, many of them continue to be persecuted by the government. Father Ly is in prison and is suffering from very poor health, and Attorney Nguyen Van Dai remains under house arrest.

Despite this dismal status for human rights in Vietnam, there are new opportunities for the United States to exert pressure on the government to cease these abuses.

H.R. 1410, the Vietnam Human Rights Act which I introduced last year—and which passed the House previously in 2007—would provide significant motivation to the government of Vietnam to respect its international human rights obligations. It would prohibit any annual increase in the amount of non-humanitarian assistance that the United States provides to Vietnam unless there is an equal or greater increase in the amount of assistance for human rights and democracy promotion programming in Vietnam.

An increase in non-humanitarian assistance would also be prohibited unless Vietnam satisfies certain requirements, including substantial progress toward respect for the freedom of religion and freedom of expression and assembly, respect for ethnic and minority rights, and allowing Vietnamese nationals free and open access to United States refugee programs. The government would also have to end its complicity in severe forms of human trafficking.

In addition, this legislation would reaffirm the United States' commitments: to overcoming the jamming of Radio Free Asia by the Vietnamese Government; to engaging in cultural exchanges in a manner that promotes freedom and democracy in Vietnam; and to offer refugee resettlement to Vietnamese nationals who have been deemed ineligible solely due to administrative errors or for other reasons beyond their control.

I thank all of our witnesses for appearing before the Subcommittee yesterday.

HONORING THOMAS W. KLENDER

HON. SAM GRAVES

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, January 25, 2012

Mr. GRAVES of Missouri. Mr. Speaker, I proudly pause to recognize Thomas W. Klender. Thomas is a very special young man who has exemplified the finest qualities of citizenship and leadership by taking an active part in the Boy Scouts of America, Troop 395, and earning the most prestigious award of Eagle Scout.

Thomas has been very active with his troop, participating in many scout activities. Over the many years Thomas has been involved with scouting, he has not only earned numerous merit badges, but also the respect of his family, peers, and community. Most notably, Thomas has contributed to his community through his Eagle Scout project.

Mr. Speaker, I proudly ask you to join me in commending Thomas W. Klender for his accomplishments with the Boy Scouts of Amer-

ica and for his efforts put forth in achieving the highest distinction of Eagle Scout.

TRIBUTE TO MS. CARRIE NOVICK

HON. GREG WALDEN

OF OREGON

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, January 25, 2012

Mr. WALDEN. Mr. Speaker, it is with great pleasure that I take this opportunity to honor Ms. Carrie Novick on the occasion of her retirement. Since 1990, Carrie has served as the airport manager for Roberts Field, Redmond Municipal Airport in Redmond, Oregon. She will leave her position next Tuesday after nearly 22 years of exemplary public service to the citizens of Redmond and central Oregon.

During her tenure as airport manager, Carrie has transformed a sleepy municipal airfield into a first class regional transportation hub. Nearly two years ago, Carrie completed an airport terminal expansion project that more than doubled the size of the existing airport to 136,000 square feet, tripled its operations capacity to 45 flights per day, and allowed for more than 200,000 passengers per year to pass through its gates. For nearly ten years, Carrie worked passionately to make this fantastic project a reality.

Carrie's tenacity and good stewardship of public resources modernized the facility, increased flight availability, and improved passenger safety and services. Carrie fulfilled her vision to transform the Redmond Airport into a regional economic engine powering tourism, trade, and industry, all while improving the quality of life for area residents.

Carrie has always been eager to share her vision and passion for her work. She always made an effort to meet me whenever I was flying to or departing from the airport to brief me on the latest airport developments, offer her counsel on aviation policy, or just share a cup of coffee with me at the gate. I will miss her candor, quick wit, and indomitable spirit. I'm proud to call her my good friend.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in commending Ms. Carrie Novick for her outstanding contributions to the city of Redmond and the communities of central Oregon, and to wish her well upon her retirement. Carrie has given her time and efforts selflessly to the region and her service is worthy of the highest praise. Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

HONORING GUNNERY SERGEANT WILLIAM "DENNY" WEISGERBER

HON. MICHAEL M. HONDA

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, January 25, 2012

Mr. HONDA. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the courage and unwavering dedication of Staff Sergeant William "Denny" Weisgerber, United States Marine Corps (retired). Weisgerber is a true hero and symbol of pride for the Bay Area.

Denny Weisgerber served on active duty in the United States Marine Corps from February 1949 to May 1953. Serving as the assistant platoon Sergeant, Weisgerber saw combat action in Korea on Bunker Hill, Reno, Vegas, Seattle and Warsaw Outposts, in front of the